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A child should know who are his *num-neu-ʔong*, that is those people with whom all sexual contact is prohibited, by the time he is nine or ten. By the time he is twelve or thirteen a boy should also know those women whom he is permitted to sleep with—usually a very much smaller number than those who are forbidden. In the case of those relations of a generation above his own—that is to say, the wives of his father's 'elder brothers', he also has to know which of these women his father has slept with beforehand, for in that case the potential partner becomes permanently forbidden. Thus for example, Chimpet can never sleep with nor inherit his 'aunt' Mrs. Datoop (Tafoor calls Datoop 'elder brother' although they are actually three generations away from a common ancestor) because several years ago his father slept with her. Since sexual relationships outside the prohibited degrees are not considered embarrassing or important, no unpleasant or guilt-ridden situation arises through the father having to inform his son about his earlier sexual life. Such subjects are rather a matter for joking, but it would be a disaster if, through ignorance, the son cut short the family line.

iv.

Owing to the wide application of the incest ban it often happens that a boy or girl has not a single potential spouse or unmarried love-partner in the same village; and consequently in the far greater number of cases a boy's wife has to be sought from a distant village, and a girl has to leave her home far behind when she goes to her husband. Of the sixty married women in Lingthem all but thirteen were from outside; and of these thirteen four had married newcomers to the village.[4] The remaining nine were either representatives of small *ptso*, or else their husbands were.

Lepchas make their first marriage extremely young. In Lingthem there was only one girl over fourteen unbetrothed, and that was Prumtu, who had a bad squint, was reputed to be lazy, and had a rough and unpleasing character. Eight boys over sixteen were unbetrothed; they were the two carpenters,[5] three mental defectives who will never be married, and three orphans. These orphans were Satéo, who was very badly lame and without property

[4] For a full list of married women and their place of origin see Appendix I, 2, Table II.

[5] See Chapter Four, p. 121.

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Lamaist horoscopes, like European ones, are automatic in their application, and, in the event of two or more people being born or dying in the same hour the horoscopes will be identical. The Lepchas thoroughly believe in the validity of the horoscopes and almost always carry out their instructions implicitly. It is believed that the defectives are abnormal because they or their parents neglected the indicated precautions.

It is only with the ceremonies prescribed by horoscopes that the possibility arises of a Lepcha failing to perform indicated ceremonies. Lamas come spontaneously to assist the soul of a dead man, and their presence, though usual, is not essential on any other occasion; in the case of present or threatened illness or danger the sufferer summons the lama to perform the requisite ceremonies; if for any reason he did not wish to perform the ceremonies he would not send for the priest.

On the whole the extent of employment of lamas by laymen depends on the personal inclination and beliefs of the layman in question. The greater number of lamaist ceremonies demand less expenditure than equivalent ones by Mun, since they do not involve the killing of animals. This generalisation must however be modified in one particular. Apart from jewels the only possible method of conspicuous expenditure for the ambitious is the erection of a lamaist altar in the *dé-ong* of his house and the purchase of the Boom or some other anthology of the lamaist scriptures. Once these are installed the visits of lamas at fairly constantly recurring intervals are essential for the reading of the scriptures and the performance of the necessary rites. Scriptures have to be read four times a year and since no layman can read, lamas have to be hired, feasts given to them and fees paid to them. This expense can only be stopped by selling or giving away the sacred books or objects.

Belief in horoscopes does not induce a feeling of fatalism, for every misfortune foretold carries with it its appropriate remedy. Unless a layman's child is predestined to become a lama people usually know nothing at all of their own first horoscopes, nor do parents usually remember for long the horoscope cast for their children. I never heard of an instance of an angry parent or elder sibling reproach a child because of the expense it had necessitated, nor throw in their face their unfavourable forecast. Even when people were trying to convince me of the validity of horoscopes they never quoted the realisation of past horoscopes, but only the

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Even for a Lepcha Gongyop is preternaturally shy and I had to woo him very assiduously before he would talk to me. But I found with him as I did with others that once his confidence was gained he was willing to talk absolutely without reserve. Indeed one day I had to run away from him because I had asked him a question about his divining necklace; he explained in great distress that if he told anybody the full details about it he would loose all the power of divining through it, so please would I not ask him. I changed the subject, but naturally curious, kept glancing at the necklace, and after a little he started to tell me about it. A similar dilemma arose three or four times with Lepchas; it would seem as though once they had accepted you they can neither lie nor prevaricate, and will tell secrets which they will bitterly regret mentioning later. Towards the end of our relationship Gongyop asked me very shyly (for it was, in a way, a confession of failure for a Mun) for medicine for sores: and then he showed me on his shoulder a growth which to my unpractised eye looked like cancer.

Gongyop was the youngest of four children; almost as soon as he was weaned he was adopted by the younger brother of his paternal grandmother in whose house he spent the greater part of his life; recently however he has returned to look after his blind old father. His eldest brother, who was a lama, died with his wife and two of his children in a dysentery epidemic; his two surviving children are Sangkyar, a cretinous defective, and Satéo, who is lame and rather silly. The next brother is Thyak Thimbu; he too is a Mun (he has the paternal spirit, Gongyop the maternal); after him came a sister, now dead, who was married, first to a 'brother' of Dunbi, and then to Kurma. Gongyop became a Padem twenty years ago, the spirit descending to him from his father's maternal uncle who died five years before the possession; he became a Mun five years ago, the spirit descending from his mother's elder sister who died ten years before the possession.

'At the time of the onset of the illness which showed the possession of Padem I had been married for five years and my wife was pregnant; she was later delivered of a still-born daughter. Subsequently we had a son who is still living. I was taken very ill, so ill that I could not eat or drink *chi* or move or even go out of the house to relieve myself; I felt as though I was bound with ropes. After another Mun had recognised the spirit which was possessing me I recovered quickly and was then able to perform all the rituals of which Padem are capable. There is no need of a teacher for the

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reared by strangers, but this is seldom successful. This course was tried with a boy from Lungdeum and also with Katel's eldest son; but both boys ran away and wandered all over the place, Katel's son finally dying young in foreign parts. The only person in Lingthem who was really *tané*—a quarreller and a thief—was Sangkyar, who is a cretinous defective.

V

When a child stops being a baby and becomes a young Lepcha the world becomes a more difficult place for him. Instead of being treated with a rather impersonal kindness, he is now treated with a rather impersonal neglect. He has the compensation of adult equipment—the knife and haversack which are the outward sign of physical independence—but he is also judged by adult standards; he is capable of committing adult crimes, and has to show that he possesses the adult virtues. By negative standards the children form a group; the younger ones leave the baby group to become trained to be adults; the elder ones are by their increased knowledge and initiative more and more accepted into the group of full-grown adults, as they become more self-supporting—it is considered that at the age of twelve boys and girls should be capable of doing the full work of a man or woman—and marriage arrangements are made for them. The children are not in opposition to the adults; they are not as a group ill-treated, though possibly individuals may be, except for the occasional blows they may get if they are a nuisance; they are provided with plenty of food as before; and, except for only children, or children of the very poorest parents, they have an animal or so and a little piece of ground as their private property.[8] Full adult status is a goal they have to work towards; they see this goal and the greater number of children are very anxious to grow up. This is particularly true of the boys, who have to wait longer before they can be considered fully adult; the girls attain psychological maturity much earlier, for by the age of twelve they are considered to be at their most beautiful and are usually *asék*'d; and even earlier they may become sexually conscious and realise that because of their sex they have a quality which makes them important and desirable to adults. It is only temperamentally or socially maladjusted children who appear to be oppressed by the neglect and occasional harsh treatment which is part of their

[8] See Chapter Three, p. 108.

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Above: DADOOL AND RIGYA (IN HAT)
Below: KANDEN AND CHIMPET. CHIMPET IS LAUGHING SO MUCH THAT HE IS NEARLY IN TEARS; KANDEN SMILES SECRETIVELY

[facing p. 368]

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all three saving up as hard as we can to have a really pukka house with a tin roof and good floors; for this reason we are denying ourselves practically everything except the barest necessities until we get our house. (*His eyes gleamed as he spoke about this.*) We wear the plainest of clothes; my wife has no jewels, but puts the money aside from her cardamum to pay for the house; we only eat plain food, just rice. Others waste a lot of crops for *chi* but we don't; now and again we have a little but between whiles we just drink tea. *We* don't get into debt for showy clothes and useless gew-gaws. Even now I am really richer than Tafoor who has lots and lots of debts; and as for my father (Ashyok) and my elder brother (Aplung), why they haven't anything; as soon as they get a rupee they go and spend it and never save a *pice*. Of course we give feasts; if we did not follow the *lungthen* (custom) and perform the proper ceremonies we would die. Yes, it is nice when we give the monastery feast; our turn comes in the winter; last year we gave a pig. But soon—soon—we will have the lovely house with the tin roof; there won't be another one like it in Lingthem, though I have heard that the younger brother of Takneum who lives at Tangvong has got one. As soon as we have saved up enough money we will give the measurements to the kanya and they will get the corrugated iron. We would certainly never think of going to buy *chi* as other people do if we run out of it.'

ii

An important group of deviants are the defectives. Of these there are three, all males; they are Sangkyar, the elder son of Gongyop's eldest brother (now dead: the other son is lame Satéo), the middle son of Asang, and Kanden, the elder son of Také and the elder brother of Dadool. Although Sangkyar is very different from the other two, all three show the same symptoms of compulsive wandering, and this is considered by Lepchas to be an inevitable concomitant to feeble-mindedness in males: indeed they are called 'wanderers'. This symptom does not apparently show itself in girls and women; I neither saw nor heard of similarly afflicted girls.

Sangkyar I only saw once. He has a typically cretinous expression and type of behaviour. He is the example *par excellence* of the bad boy, the *tané*; he wanders about and sleeps in the forest and steals from other people's houses and fields. He takes food and

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does not do his share of the work; he leaves immediately he has got what he wanted. He is unsettled and unco-operative; there is nothing good to be said of him, and no excuses to be made for him, for he does not attempt to do as much as he could. It is said that he suffers from genital infantilism and fimosis; if he wanted to marry he would not be able to find a wife, but he does not want to. Since his parents' death he lives with his uncle, Thyak Thimbu; but he finds him very unsatisfactory for he is always going away.

This instability and wandering are also the chief symptoms of Asang's idiot son and Kanden. Since I saw quite a lot of Kanden and very little of the other I propose to describe Kanden; the medical histories of the two young men are almost identical.

Kanden was born in 1912, the middle of three brothers, but the elder boy died in infancy. When Kanden was about two years old his mother died and his father ran away with another woman; for five years Kanden was brought up by his 'aunt', Lumba's first wife. According to his father and to all the neighbours, Kanden was quite a normal boy as a child and up to the age of thirteen; until that age he was a good and sensible boy and worked properly and well. When his horoscope was cast at birth it was found that he was the reincarnation of a Tibetan lama, but when he went to Lumba to study he could not learn and got duller and duller until he was forced to give up the study. From that time he has suffered from wandering fits; sometimes just as he is going to eat he will get up without saying a word and go away for three, five, or seven days. During these fits he does not speak; and it seems as though he recognises nobody. He just wanders about sleeping and eating anywhere. Were he to steal or do anything wrong his parents would be held responsible, but in point of fact he does not do so. This state is caused by a supernatural called Kyon-rek; no exorcism is efficacious; the boy will get worse and worse till he dies an early death. There is no general reason for boys getting into this state (according to Tafoor, in Kanden's case it is the result of going against his destiny to be a lama); in a large (extended) family there is likely to be one wanderer. Besides Asang's son Dunbi's younger brother, now dead, was also a wanderer.

Most of the statements about Kanden given above were made by his father. Some weeks after I had got this information Kanden came up to gather firewood in company with Chimpet and I had a talk with him. It was not in any way a formal interview; we were all sitting together on the stones outside the monastery; there were

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betel nut and cigarettes provided. Chimpet did a great deal of the talking; he was always a rather irrepressible little boy, and on this occasion he was bubbling over with jokes and dirty remarks more than usual. A great number of the remarks made by Kanden arose out of Chimpet's statements. My interpreter was present, but everybody was completely used to him by that time. A lot of the talk was fairly meaningless jokes; I asked Kanden the type questions which it was known I asked everybody; what his earliest memories were; who his relations were and if he liked them; what his first sexual experience was; what his ambition was; what private property he had; whether he had heard or seen devils. I was particularly trying to find out about his wanderings and led the conversation back to them whenever I could without stressing the point. The only subject I tried to elaborate were his relations with Pichi, after he had emphatically stated that he preferred him to anybody else. I was very anxious not to frighten him and therefore did not ask any searching questions or insist on any subject for which he showed distaste. As far as I could judge the atmosphere was friendly and indeed frivolous.

Since I know of no other record of a primitive mental defective I propose to insert *verbatim* the notes which I made immediately after the interview, in order that, if possible, other people may be able to make a diagnosis.

'April 30th. Kanden came up to gather firewood this morning and I was able to talk to him for a couple of hours. He is twenty-five, heavy featured, and thick-lipped with rather more black hairs on the legs than the other Lepchas of his age. He sits on the whole very still, gesturing with one arm from the elbow, except when he is embarrassed, when he fidgets with a twig on the ground. He is of obviously low vitality.

'On the whole he speaks quite rationally; he can answer questions about relationship and so on consequentially. He speaks slowly and is rather liable to drop his voice to a confidential whisper. He has rather a foolish laugh and never laughed spontaneously, but when anybody else did he joined in a good deal. Chimpet was present, usually making obscene remarks which Kanden thought funny. Chimpet is more than ten years his junior, but he treated him as if they were of an age, whispering to him after he had gone away for a little "Did you kill a bird?" and reproving him as *tané* when he confessed to having had sexual experience.

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'Kanden knows his own story apparently from telling, for he says he has no memory of the time before he was about Chimpet's age. His mother died when he was about two and he was taken and looked after by Lumba, who is a sort of maternal uncle and who at that time had no sons. When he was big enough to carry a water bamboo (that is about five) his father ran away to Darjeeling. Dadool, his younger brother, was looked after by his father's elder brother, now dead, and his wife. When his father returned—that is when the boy was about ten—he took him back. A couple of years after that he went to an old *omzet*, now dead, to study to be a lama;[8] but he had to give it up as he had no time to study—there was all the *work* in the house and the fields. He would have liked to have learnt.

'Shortly after this his compulsive wanderings began. He would suddenly feel that he did not like his parents and that he had got to go away to *work* for others. He would go to somebody else's house—usually a relation—Songpo is an "uncle" and the Mandal's third wife an "elder sister"—and help them in their *work*, staying two, three, five or seven days before returning home. When he was a young boy his father used to send him to help his relations with their *work* and sometimes he used to feel he had to go home. He speaks with embarrassment and some giggling of these wanderings and in a low voice, but he answers quite sensibly. The feeling comes over him irresistibly; it is not accompanied by any sense delusions. He knows his parents and so on, but does not, then, want to have anything to do with them. He "just thinks he wants to go and help others with their *work*. As long as he helps others with their *work* others will help him. He goes to their house and it becomes late and he stops there."

'He is happiest of all working in the fields or gathering firewood or in the house. The happiest time of his life was as a boy. He does not want to get older and die. He is not married, does not want to marry, has never seen a woman he would like to marry, has never copulated, and never gets erections.[9] At marriages and feasts boys and girls get together and copulate, but he never does nor has done. As a boy he used to talk and joke with the girls but never anything more.

'He does not like his stepmother; she feeds him all right and

[8] His father said his teacher was Lumba: I do not know who is correct.

[9] Datoop says that Kanden did sleep with Asang's wife, but she now won't have him, and nobody else likes him as he is a fool.

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does not hit him but she scolds; not only him but also his brother and father. He not only does not like her as well as his real mother (whom he obviously never knew) but prefers Lumba's first wife. Indeed he does not like women at all; when he helps people with their *work* he always helps men, usually either old men or boys. His great friend whom he calls *ingʔong* is Pichi, the son of Datoop; he loves him very much, more than his brother. I do not think, however, there is any question of a homosexual attachment here; he says they never put their arms round one another's shoulders; and when I asked if he thought it would be nice, since they were both unmarried, to set up house together and live alone, he replied without enthusiasm that (*a*) The parents would not allow it, and (*b*) Pichi would refuse. They just help one another in their *work*.[10]

'He never wanders far, he says, nor goes into the forest. He just goes to other people's houses to help them.

'He has never seen a devil, but has heard some and been frightened. These devils are Ingbong *moong* and Numeen *moong* who cry like babies and Bamoo *moong* who cries like an old woman and is a sort of banshee predicting death. He heard her once crying by a stream one day when he was lying at home in bed. He has also heard Zombu *moong* which is the devil which causes death, and which can be heard on the day of burial and also on the anniversary of the death. None of these devils have ever spoken. He has also dreamt of lamas and bejewelled women who indicate the presence of Lungzi-chen *moong*. There is nothing in any way exceptional about hearing these devils; many others have said they have heard them and Chimpet said he had heard and been frightened of Zombu *moong*.

'He says he has two or three oxen and two or three pigs as his own private property, but his parents look after them and feed them. He buys his own clothes out of the produce of his own cardamum fields. I could not make out whether the rice terraces near the Mandal's house belonged to him or to his parents; I think the latter. He speaks eagerly of work in the fields. The dry rice is sown, but so far neither the millet nor wet rice. He gives all his money and goods to his parents; if he were married he would have separate property, but as things are he has nothing separate or secret from his father. He is fond of his father, likes him better than Lumba.

[10] Pichi said later that he and Kanden are no longer friends; they used to live near each other and work together; now he is no longer friendly with him. Pichi also said that when he is not wandering he is a good worker.

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X 159 732 'He would like to be wealthy and have lots of good food and clothes. He thinks he would like to go to live at Gangtok where he has been three or four or five times. (Numbers always confuse him; in any question demanding a numerical answer he always gives a number of alternatives—an exaggeration of a cultural trait.)

'The first time he wandered away he went to his uncle Songpo; he "thought he would be angry if he did not go and help them with their *work*." He still thinks that he has to go and help people or they will be angry.

'When he asked Chimpet if he had killed a bird he first of all denied having done so himself and then said that he had killed no big animal but has caught birds in snares. He showed little interest in this; did not care if the birds were caught alive or dead; apparently of no emotional importance.

'All through the interview—I reverted to the subject of his wanderings several times, but never stressed it—there came up the obsessive connection between wandering and helping others with their *work*. "I go away to help others clean the ground and sow and then it gets dark and I stay there. As long as I help others others will help me." His aversion to sex also came up several times. It is worth noting that Kanden exceptionally had no *oongop* to educate him sexually. It is possible that such a relation might have quieted his fear of women. Of course there are a number of women with whom he had a theoretical right to sleep, but none who were in a position to make a direct approach.'

X 159 732 158 I have given this interview at such length because it seems to me to raise a problem of particular interest. As far as I can tell from this interview with Kanden, from casual contacts with Asang's idiot son, and from the description of other wanderers given by Lepchas, there would appear to be considerable parallels between the Lepcha wanderers and the schizophrenics of our own culture. The parallels between 'wandering' and schizophrenia appear to me to be the following: the symptoms nearly always declare themselves in the second decade of life, after an apparently normal childhood; there are some physical abnormalities—the excess of body hair and a certain thickening of the features; there is the low or absent sexual impulse; there is the relative immobility and the very confidential voice. On the other hand what is for the Lepchas the most significant feature of all is the motiveless wandering, which has more obvious resemblance to a compulsion neurosis than to schizophrenia.

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Also there do not seem to be any hallucinations (the hearing of devils cannot be so classified, as it is part of the expected behaviour of every child), nor, save during the wandering fits, any change of emotional attitude towards the members of the immediate family.

It seems to me possible that the forms of insanity clinically recognised are culturally determined; and in that case the state of affairs which in Occidental societies would produce either schizophrenia or compulsion neurosis, among the Lepchas produces the various syndromes of which the wandering is the most obvious feature. In the case of Kanden it is noteworthy that the cultural stress on co-operation has produced what would appear to be a feeling of neurotic anxiety so strong that it interferes with the individual's proper performance of his own work. This suggestion of the cultural determination of the symptoms of insanity is inevitably completely tentative, since I know of no other records of definitely abnormal types in non-European cultures.

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